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Politics On The Launching Pad

Allen Dulles, the intelligence boss, was before a Senate committee the other day to explain the new estimates on Russian missile strength.

It was a secret affair, naturally, but a television reporter was waiting at the door when the senators finally filed out.

His question: Are you reassured by what you have been told? Or are you disturbed by it?

The first man before the mike was Sen. Stuart Symington, Democrat, candidate for President. He was very, very disturbed.

Then came Sen. Lyndon Johnson, Democrat, candidate for the Presidency. He was also very disturbed.

Finally came Sen. Alexander Wiley, Republican. He was relieved, reassured.

The answers were straight from the script of election year politics. They were exactly what might have been expected—no more, no less. The Republican defended

the Administration; the Democrats attacked it. We have no more idea of how the Dulles report was received by the committee than if these interviews have never been conducted.

National defense is a difficult enough subject to fathom even when it stands alone. It will be wrapped in the fog of partisan politics this year. Votes and personal ambitions will fuel every bomber and stand behind every missile.

Such voters as are interested in the truth must pursue it through an obstacle course.